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Mother Nature's Picnic

—BY—

ALICE GAY JUDD

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MOTHER NATURE'S PICNIC

By
ALICE GAY JUDD

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ELDRIDGE ENTERTAINMENT HOUSE,
FRANKLIN, OHIO DENVER, COLO.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Mother Nature	March	Jack Frost
Weather Man	April	Peter Crow
Winter	May	Three Elves
Spring	June	Eight Flowers
Summer	July	Two Heralds
Autumn	August	Eight Leaves
December	September	North Wind
January	October	South Wind
February	November	East Wind
	3 Wood-nymphs	West Wind

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COSTUMES

Mother Nature—Loose robe of green; flowing hair; head-band of green.

Weather Man—Dark suit with frock coat; high hat.

Winter—Black suit trimmed to represent ice and snow; crown of snow and ice.

Winter Months—Black suits trimmed to represent ice and snow.

Spring—Pale green gown; wreath of snowballs.

Spring Months—Pale green dresses; wreaths and baskets of spring flowers.

Summer—Pale pink gown, gilt crown and sceptre.

Summer Months—Pale pink dresses, wreaths and baskets of summer flowers.

Autumn—Tight-fitting suit of russet.

Autumn Months—Tight-fitting suits of russet, pointed caps.

Jack Frost—Tight-fitting suit of white; pointed cap and shoes.

Wood-nymphs—Short gowns of white.

Elves—Brownie suits of green.

Winds—Flowing gowns of pale gray; flowing hair; silver head-bands.

Flowers—Green gowns and stockings; flower caps.

Leaves—Green suits made as nearly as possible to represent leaves; (make out of stiff paper).

Peter Crow—Crow suit.

Suggestion: Drills and steps from folk-dances used in school, may be used with good effect in this entertainment.

Mother Nature's Picnic

PROLOGUE

(Spoken in front of curtain by a young lady)

If you will sit very quiet, a story to you I will tell;
And some time, just at noontide, or when moonlight falls on a dell,
If you open the doors of fancy, and listen without a sound,
You will find in the warmth and silence, or the silvery moonlight's ray,
That the living things about us all have a time for play.
The grasses and leaves and the flowers, the fairies and nymphs and elves,
Have wonderful games and parties just among themselves.
They dance as the winds dance with them, and the birds sweet choristers are,
While the cheery wood-folks are telling sweet secrets from near and far.
Sometimes their mood is playful, and with members of their ranks,
They love to have jokes and jesting, and all sorts of elfish pranks.
The glorious months and seasons add always their touch of grace
To whatever day and time of year, and wherever the trysting place.
And Nature, the wise, kind Mother, who knows her children well,
Will never fail—no, never—to furnish the magic spell.
But, there's just one bit of a secret I'd whisper, and then I'm through—
You must have the faith of childhood to make this story true.

Mother Nature's Picnic.

ACT I.

Scene—Edge of wood for background; open space in front, with bush or small tree at side; a few rustic seats.

(Enter Mother Nature, carrying branch of tree and basket of flowers.)

Heigho! this lovely first of May,
I feel right festive, bright and gay.
I think that I'll a picnic plan
To which shall come no mortal man.

Nor will I ask a single child,
For in the woods they act quite wild;
And in their mad and reckless play,
Pull flowers and branches to throw away.

(Seats herself on a log.)

Now, whom *shall* I ask to my picnic? For I will not have a mortal being. I know! I'll ask all the seasons of the year and their children, the months, and the winds, and the rain and the snow, and as many flowers and birds as can come—and the wood-nymphs and elves.

Peter Crow—(who has hopped in and comes up behind her while Mother Nature is speaking) Caw! caw! caw!

Mother Nature—Peter Crow, you bad fellow! How you frightened me! Didn't I tell you to stay at home and work until I got back?

Peter Crow—Yes, but I got tired of scratching in the garden. I couldn't find any worms and all the rest of the birds were having a good time.

Mother Nature—That doesn't make any difference; you disobeyed me. Now, you shall carry around all the invitations to my picnic, instead of going to play. I was going to ask Robin to do it, he's such an obliging fellow, but now you shall do it for a punishment.

Peter Crow—Caw! Caw! Caw!

Mother Nature—I'm going to write the invitations now, and you stay right here till I bring them back.

(Exit Mother N., Peter Crow walking behind and mimicking her until she is out of sight.)

Peter Crow—(sings without any special tune and without accompaniment)

Oh, I'm a crow, a bad, bad crow,
At least the people tell me so;
They say I steal and rob and fight,
And never, never do what's right.

And Mother Nature says I tear
Her patience into shreds of care!
I'm sorry if it's really so—
I hate to be a bad, bad crow.

If only I'd been painted blue;
Or green or lavender would do.
It's being black that makes me bad,
And badness makes me awful sad.

(Peter Crow's voice cracks when he tries to reach some of his notes. He takes out handkerchief and weeps at end of song.)

(As he finishes, an elf jumps out from behind tree.)

Elf—Ho, ho, Peter Crow, what's the matter with your voice? If I couldn't sing any better than you can, I'd never let anybody hear me.

Peter Crow—You'd better behave yourself, you bad little elf, or I won't let you come to Mother Nature's pic-

Elf—Ho, I'm not afraid of *you;* and I will come to the picnic if I want to!

(Peter Crow starts after the elf and they have a merry chase around the stage. Exit Elf.)

(Enter Mother Nature, carrying small basket.)

Mother N.—Here are the invitations, Peter Crow. You must hurry as fast as you can, for I want everybody here in time for dinner.

(Exit Mother N.)

Peter Crow—(takes basket, and hides behind small tree at side of stage) Guess I'd better look over these invitations so I'll know where I have to go. *(Takes them out one by one and reads names aloud; finds those for Snow and Rain.)* No, sir! I'm not going to take these! Nobody wants Rain or Snow at a picnic; spoils the whole thing. I'll just tear these up and Mother Nature will think they are too busy to come. *(Tears the two invitations into small pieces. Hears noise, and peeks around tree to see who is coming.)*

(Enter Weather Man. Walks around slowly.)

Oh, what a splendid situation,
In which to follow meditation.
The weather here I'll safely plan,
And feel no fear of any man.

I'll fix up all the spring and summer,
And I just guess I'll make a hummer,
Of working time I put in double,
And always have no end of trouble,

Trying all the folks to please.
Now, here among these shady trees,
I'll lie me down and take a nap,
Then back to work with pep and snap.

(Goes back and lies down out of sight among trees.)

Peter Crow—Ho, ho, Mr. Weather Man, so you're here, are you? It won't be very good for you if all these people find you. If you're going to sleep, I guess I'll cov-

er you up for safe keeping. *(Covers Weather Man with leaves and small branches; tries on Weather Man's hat, sticks it on side of head, picks up basket of invitations, and struts off stage.)*

CURTAIN

ACT II.

(Enter three Wood-nymphs and three Elves. Join hands and dance.)

(*Song after dance. Tune "Golden Rod Gay," from* YE MERRY TUNES, *15 cents.*)

Merry are we Wood-nymphs and Elves,
Happy wood-folk out here by ourselves;
Neither care we for work or care,
Light-hearted we and free as the air.

We've come away, this happy day,
In this green wood we come to play.
Seasons and months, fairies and winds,
Birds and the flowers of various kinds.

Mother, old dear, invited us all;
Good Peter Crow was sent out to call
Gay invitations to every one,
This happy day to join the fun.

First Wood-nymph—Let's get to work and clean up the woods for Mother Nature, so it will be ready when the guests arrive.

Others—Oh, yes, let's get to work quickly.

First Elf—We elves can dust the trees; they look as though Mother Nature hadn't cleaned them up for a long time.

Second Wood-nymph—And we can straighten the seats and put these poor flowers in a bowl of water. I suppose some bad chlidren picked them and threw them away.

Second Elf—And just look at all these little pieces of paper. What do you suppose Mother Nature has been doing?

Third Elf—I tell you what we'll do; you wood-nymphs play and dance, and we'll clean up.

(Wood-nymphs play and dance while elves hurry away and come back with long-handled dusters with which they set to work cleaning trees.)

(Enter the Four Winds, swaying gently as they walk, their draperies fluttering.)

North Wind—Why, here are the Elves and the Wood-nymphs! What are you doing here, children? We traveled so swiftly we thought surely we would be the first ones here.

First Elf—We were cleaning up for Mother Nature and she doesn't know we're here. Hush, she's coming; let's surprise her.

(They hide, and as Mother N. comes bustling in, jump out at her.)

Mother N.—You dear children! When did you come and what are you doing?

Wood-nymphs and Elves—(Recite.)

We're cleaning up your fine green wood;
We knew you were busy with lunch and things,
And thought perhaps we could do some good,
Before the noontide your company brings.

Winds—

We've come to you, mother, with greatest speed,
Thinking there might be something you'd need,
And whom do you know that can give you a lift,
And help things along like the breezes so swift?

We've traveled so fast and traveled so far;
High mountains we crossed with never a jar;
And lowlands we skimmed with the greatest ease,
And we piled up the whitecaps upon the high seas.

We tore through the cities with crash and a roar,
We tossed the white clouds as on high we did soar,
We ruffled the rivers and creeks as we passed,
And glad, indeed, are we to be here at last.

(Dance) (Exeunt Nymphs and Elves.)

Mother Nature—Welcome, dear Winds; I know you are tired with your journey. Sit down and rest while I welcome these newcomers.

(Heralds announce Winter and Summer.)

(Enter King Winter with his children, December, January and February; and Queen Summer with her children, June July and August.)

King Winter—

Ho, Mother Nature, I am here
At your polite command,
But, for myself and children three,
Full justice I demand.

From far up north, in ice and snow,
We've come, this warm, spring day;
And you must realize quite well
My children don't like May.

I will not have them heated up
As they play here together,
And take them home all sick with colds,
Caught in this torrid weather.

Queen Summer—

Dear Mother Nature, *I* am here
At your polite command,
And for myself and children three,
Full justice *I* demand.

I do not like King Winter's air,
His manners are too chilly;
And, for his children taking cold,
I really think that's silly.

Dear August, here, and sweet July
Are very, very warm;
They shall not play with Winter's boys,
Lest they should come to harm.

Mother N.—I am amazed that any of my guests should quarrel so. It is very, very impolite. Summer, you take your little girls over there, and the South Wind shall fan you gently to keep you cool. And Winter shall come over here, and North Wind shall fan him to keep him from getting too hot. And I forbid you to have anything to do with each other all day.

(Winter and his children go to one side of stage and North Wind fans them. Summer and children go to opposite side and South Wind fans them.)

(Eight leaves come frolicking in, turning handsprings and whirling about.)

Leaves—(Sing: Tune, "The Blue Birds," from YE MERRY TUNES, *15 cents.)*

Oh, we're the lively little leaves,
Growing in the forest trees;
Shimmering in the sun and rain,
We gaily dance in the summer breeze.

Hurrah, we're happy and so glad,
Just living out in the woods all the time.
We're careless, free, way up in the tree,
Jolly we—all the time.

West Wind—Sisters, let us chase these mischievous leaves, and see them go whirling and dancing.

(Winds spread their draperies, and swoop down on the Leaves, who go whirling and hopping in all directions. At the end of the frolic, Leaves and Winds exit. Spring enters, announced by two heralds, and followed by March, April and May.)

Spring—

Mother, dear, you will, I pray,
Excuse me for my long delay.
But, Oh, I've done so many things:
I've cleaned the ice out of the springs,
I've touched the grass and hill-tops high,
And swept dark clouds from out the sky.

I've coaxed the birds and fed them well,
And painted flowers in the dell.
I've worked so hard I thought I'd drop;
It seemed as if I couldn't stop;
And yet there's so much left to do,
I don't know when I will get through.

(Exeunt heralds.)

Mother N.—I know you are a very busy person, dear Spring, but it will do you good to have a rest and a little pleasure.

(Heralds announce Autumn. Enter Autumn, followed by September, October and November, and Jack Frost.)

Mother N.—Why here comes Autumn! Welcome, Autumn, we greet you gladly.

Autumn—Thank you, dear Mother Nature. I am glad to be here. This is my vacation time, so I am not as busy as Spring and can go to picnics. I brought that rogue, Jack Frost, with me, for I didn't know what mischief he might get into if I left him alone.

Mother N.—I'm glad you did bring him, for he is always geting into mischief and doing things he ought not to.

(Winter months come out with Jack Frost.)

Jack Frost—

Who traces such pictures rare
On every window pane?
Who makes such coverlets fair,
For branch and bush and cane?

Who charges the still, clear air,
On a beautiful star-lit night?
Who takes the greatest care
To have autumn mornings bright?

Who colors noses and cheeks
A beautiful ruddy red?
Who frosts the snow till it squeaks,
Under the wheel and sled?

Dear people, *I* do these things,
I am wicked Jack Frost, you know.
But emperors and kings
Can't show you the things I show.

Autumn—We didn't mean to hurt your feelings, Jacky, but you are full of all sorts of pranks and you spring them on us most unexpectedly.

August—I want to play with Jack Frost, Mother; I think he is a nice little boy.

Summer—Mercy, no, August, don't go near him.

(Jack goes toward her; Summer shoos him away.)

May—I want to play with him, too.

Spring—*(in alarm)* Don't you come near us! You are worse than the measles, Jack Frost. You would shrivel up our pretty flowers in no time.

Winter and Autumn—Come and play with our little boys, Jacky.

Jack Frost—I don't want to. I want to play with the little girls. *(Sits alone at side of stage.)*

Mother N.—Who comes now?

(Enter two heralds; behind them eight girls dressed as flowers.)

Heralds—We announce the coming of the flowers,
Two by two from out the season's bowers.

(Heralds stand aside, and flowers enter, Holly and Snow-berry, Violet and Buttercup, Daisy and Rose, Goldenrod and Chrysanthemum. Give fancy dance or drill. We suggest "May Day Baskets, in HELP-U *Primary Drill Book, 40 cents. Applause at end. Leaves enter.)*

Mother N.—That was beautiful, dear children. Thank you for planning such a fine surprise for my picnic. Now, run and play till the birds come, and then we will have dinner.

(Enter East Wind)

East Wind—I see Peter Crow coming as fast as he can fly, but he is all alone. I wonder what has happened to the other birds.

(Jack Frost leaves seat at side of stage and tries to get close to Spring and Summer Months. They chase him away, and he hides behind Mother N. and pulls her hair. Mother N. blows whistle and a Brownie policeman enters.)

Mother N.—I didn't think we would need you today, Brownie, but Jack Frost is behaving so badly, I think you had better lock him up until dinner is ready.

(Policeman takes hold of Jack to lead him away, but Jack pinches his nose and slips away from him and hides among the trees.)

(Enter Peter Crow.)

Peter Crow—The other birds can't come, Mother Nature. They are so sorry, but they have been engaged to give a May festival concert today. They said they would come this way and sing as they passed us. And not one of them asked me to go with them. They don't think I can sing at all. *(Takes out handkerchief and pretends to cry. Spring and Summer months run to him and pet him.)*

March—You mustn't cry, Peter Crow. We all like you and love to hear you sing, "Caw! Caw!" as you go flying through the air. Come and sit with us. *(They lead him back with them.)*

(Enter West Wind.)

West Wind—They are coming, the birds are coming! Listen—you can hear them!

(All face toward the east, looking upward. Voices in the distance, coming closer, passing away.)

Birds' Chorus—("Bird Dreams," from YE MERRY TUNES, *15 cents.)*

All—(waving hands) Good-bye, dear birds! Come again.

Mother Nature—Wasn't that sweet of the birds? I am so sorry they couldn't stay. But now that they are gone, we must have our dinner.

Jack Frost—(calling from among the trees)

Oh, everybody, please come here,
And see what I have found;
A man, a man lying here asleep,
On our very own private ground!

Hurry, King Winter, and Autumn, too,
And help me, ere he escapes;
For a man caught napping in these woods,
His punishment surely takes.

(All hurry to him, and Winter and Autumn help him pull the Weather Man into the crowd; Peter Crow hangs onto his coat tails.)

Mother N.—It's the Weather Man; I know him.

(All speak together.)

It's the Weather Man!
We know him, for we have seen him, too.
Now, tell us, Mother Nature,
What you think we had best do.

Weather Man—

Have pity, friends, your torments spare,
While I unfold my tale of care.
No matter how I make the weather,
I can't please people altogether.

They scold and fuss and fuss and scold,
It's just too hot or just too cold;
So, I came here to rest and plan
How I could please each mortal man.

My only fault, I went to sleep
Before I solved my problem deep.
In pity's name, I beg you spare,
And have respect for all my care.

Winter—I'm tired of listening to him. He never tells the truth about me.

Autumn—Or me, either. He calls us in when it isn't our turn, and gets us so mixed, we hardly know ourselves.

Summer—I've an idea! There's always a May-pole dance at a May party. Let us have one, and the Weather Man shall be the pole. I guess when all the months and seasons wind him up in ribbons, he'll be some mixed up, himself.

All—That's a fine idea.

Weather Man—Have pity! pity!

Spring—*(clapping hands)* Elves, bring us the ribbons. Jack Frost, bring the pole.

(*Seasons and Months join hands and recite.*)

Here's a cheer for the Weather Man,
And the Seasons' May-pole dance;
Heigho, heigho, heigho, heigho,
Heigho, heigho, heigho, heigho,
We'll smile awhile as we merrily go,
Hurrah for the Weather Man!

(Elves bring ribbons and Jack Frost the May-pole. Weather Man holds the pole while the Months fasten on the ribbons. The Months then dance the May-pole dance)

Mother Nature—Now, children, I think we had better stop. I am sure the Weather Man will try harder than he has ever tried to tell the truth, and treat the Months and Seasons nicely.

All—Will you?

Weather Man—I will, I will!

Mother Nature—Dinner is ready, I know. Let us ask the Weather Man to join us, and all have a happy ending to our May Day picnic. Shall we?

All—Yes, indeed, we will.

Mother N.—We must call all the Winds and Nymphs and Leaves and Flowers. They have been playing so hard they forgot about dinner.

(Jack Frost blows Mother N's whistle, and all come trooping in, and form for grand march. Jack Frost takes one of the elves' feather dusters and marches as Drum Major. Mother N. and the Weather Man come next, the others follow, two by two; Peter Crow with the Weather Man's hat on brings up the rear. Final song at end of march. Tune, "Battle Hymn of the Republic," from YE MERRY TUNES, *15 cents.)*

Hurrah for Mother Nature,
And our friend, the Weather Man;
She loves each living creature,
And does for them all she can.

She wants us to be happy,
And she wants us to be true,
As we go living on.

Chorus—

Here's a cheer for Mother Nature,
Here's a cheer for Mother Nature,
Here's a cheer for Mother Nature,
As we go living on.
(Spoken) Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

CURTAIN.

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